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(S) NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE

WASHINGTON, D.C.

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OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

Dear Dick,

I believe you share my feeling that over the last year or so the NRO and the USIB have made considerable progress in developing an effective interface and improved communication. It has occurred to me however that perhaps this could be strengthened further, particularly as we look ahead toward the problems of the future, if we could jointly establish a group to identify and study planning problems of mutual interest. After discussions with John Bross, I attempted to outline terms of reference for such a group, considering those functions that might be useful to the Board, the NRO, and the NRP Executive Committee. I would appreciate it if you would examine these terms of reference and give me your reaction.

Such a planning group as I have in mind, I would suggest, should be chaired by my Deputy and the other principal partners should be the Chairman, COMOR and the Chairman of the SIGINT Committee with such technical support as they determine necessary to conduct their business. It might be useful if you appointed a representative of Mr. Bross's office to participate as a consultant or observer because of John's responsibility to you for overview of the intelligence activities of the Government.

If you think well of this proposal, a letter from you agreeing, it would seem to me, is all that would be required for us to proceed.

Sincerely,

Alexander H. Flax

The Honorable Richard Helms
Director of Central Intelligence
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, D. C.

NRO review(s)
completed.

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Terms of Reference
for the
Coordinating Group for Reconnaissance Planning

- a. To effect the coordination and exchange of information between the USIB and its constituent organizations and the NRO and its constituent organizations, as necessary to assure joint planning and action on emerging overhead reconnaissance problems of the NRP, which involve closely related consideration of the R&D, operations, and requirements.
- b. To identify and make available, on request, for planning studies initiated by the USIB or the NRO, competent and authoritative representation from collection, exploitation, or requirements organizations, as appropriate.
- c. To periodically review the status of major planning activity in the area of overhead reconnaissance under way in the NRO and the USIB, and their constituent organizations, and to advise the organization responsible for the study on the adequacy of the scope, the desirability of additional participation or the need for consideration of additional planning factors.
- d. To recommend to the NRO or the USIB the initiation of studies necessary to meet the overall planning needs of the intelligence community in the area of overhead reconnaissance.

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May 12, 1967

Dear Al,

I have examined your letter on the Coordination Group for Reconnaissance Planning and the Terms of Reference. I do agree that such a group offers the prospect of improving the interface with the USIB. There has been an increased flow of communication between the NRO and the Board in the last year or so and I think this new activity should strengthen our relationship.

The membership you suggest for this group seems adequate with the proviso that any Agency should be responsive to a request for assistance.

I do want to say that a problem of great concern, particularly in the area of reconnaissance, is requirements. It seems to me that because of our formal machinery we tend on occasion to define requirements so rigidly that the costs of meeting those requirements are disproportionate to the importance of achieving the totality of the requirement. Accordingly, I hope that one of the important effects of the work of such a group would be to find ways to apprise the Board of the options which might be available, some of which would not be as complete in producing results but would

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be materially less expensive. The margin of loss in certain cases might not be as critical as was first expected.

I propose to make available copies of our correspondence to the USIB for its information. Please be in touch with the chairmen of the COMOR and SIGINT Committee, whom I am requesting to represent the Board, whenever you are ready to proceed with the Coordination Group for Reconnaissance Planning.

Sincerely,

Richard Helms

The Honorable Alexander H. Flax
Director, National Reconnaissance Office
Department of Defense
Washington, D. C.

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